south dakota
STARS *connections*
Student Teacher Accountability and Reporting System

Q&A with Pierre's Dr. Cumbow
Report helps staff share with parents, students

Dr. Kyley Cumbow, principal at Georgia Morse Middle School in Pierre, posted some anonymized attendance data found in the SD-STARS Report AT.002.00-A – Student Attendance List and a note about the importance for students to attend school daily to a Facebook group for parents. The SD-STARS team wanted to know Dr. Cumbow's thoughts on using data to improve student outcomes like attendance.

SD-STARS: The SD-STARS report you posted about puts students into three groups according to their attendance rate: good, warning, and chronic. Why did you post attendance data to the parent group and explain what it means to have "good" attendance versus "warning" and "chronic?"

Dr. Cumbow: I think it is so important for parents to realize that our goal is to have GOOD attendance and not necessarily perfect attendance. Students get sick and that is a reality. I also want parents to understand how going out of town and taking vacations during the school year can also impact their child's overall attendance.

SD-STARS: Can you give an example of how you use an SD-STARS report when looking at attendance at the beginning of the school year?

Dr. Cumbow: Using [the Early Warning report] at the beginning of the year can help me determine if students are on the same path towards poor attendance, [or] acknowledge students who are doing an amazing job with their attendance compared to last year.

SD-STARS: What kinds of action steps does your school take once you know how your students are doing with attendance?

Dr. Cumbow: This is the challenge because it comes down to working with each individual student and family. The reason and needs for each can vary so there is not one program or support that works for all students. [The] greatest impact is when students can make a connection with at least one adult in the building.

SD-STARS: What kinds of action steps do you take throughout the year, related to student attendance?

Dr. Cumbow: Research indicates that regular reminders for attendance, good or poor, impacts the overall attendance of students at school. We just sent out our first letter like this, and many parents received an email that states the overall absence of all students at GMMS is just under one day (.84) and their child has missed 0.0 days. That is a positive letter. For others, it may have stated numbers higher than one, and it is a way for parents to monitor and be aware of where their child is at with attendance.

We appreciate Dr. Cumbow and thank her for taking the time to answer our questions! She would be happy to entertain any specific questions that anyone may have about her district's initiatives, which include data analysis. If you would like to connect with Dr. Cumbow, send a message to STARSHelp@state.sd.us.

Inside this issue

Upcoming joint webinar with EL team

Please join the South Dakota Department of Education's SD-STARS and English learner teams as we discover reports and enhancements in SD-STARS that are relevant to EL teachers. This webinar will be provided twice in January and is for anyone in public schools or districts who work with English learners and would like an overview of SD-STARS reports related to the EL population. This webinar will use an interactive Google Doc for questions, ideas, and takeaways. The Google links will be shared with everyone who registers and joins the webinar. The following links provide an easy way to register for this joint webinar. We hope to see you there!

Registration links:

SD-STARS & EL joint webinar for district users
Wednesday, Jan. 22, 2:30-3:30 p.m., CT
https://southdakota.gosignmeup.com/public/Course/browse?courseid=12655

SD-STARS & EL joint webinar for district users
Wednesday, Jan. 29: 2:30-3:30 p.m., CT
https://southdakota.gosignmeup.com/public/Course/browse?courseid=12756

SD-STARS team provides data activity for in-service program

Superintendent Mike Fischer was preparing an in-service day for his staff in the Oldham-Ramona School District in November and wanted to add a data-focused activity, so he reached out to the SD-STARS team. The team was happy to help and led a two-hour session on data analysis.

Local teachers and principals used a data analysis process to discover answers to data questions related to assessments, attendance, and special education. Of those teachers who dove into assessment data, staff members were paired up depending on their main subject interest, whether it be math, English language arts, or science. All participants learned how to locate data from more than one school year and for multiple subgroups of students.

They interacted with reports in SD-STARS and with each other during this fact-finding time together. The SD-STARS team answered many questions and shared online resources with the participants.

The SD-STARS team is grateful to Superintendent Fischer for the invitation to provide this training session to his staff. If your district would like a training in SD-STARS, contact STARSHelp@state.sd.us and we can discuss your training needs!

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

SD-STARS team begins daily outreach to school districts

If you have read the STARS Connections newsletter in the past, you know that the SD-STARS team has used several methods of communication to provide trainings for users in school districts statewide. We bring sessions to regional locations throughout the state. We provide topical webinars that are made available to anyone with a computer. Our team members have been known to show up at educational conferences to answer questions about SD-STARS. We have partnered with the University of South Dakota to provide graduate credits and information for educators who wish to learn about data use. We've responded to several districts' calls for assistance.

This year we initiated a one-on-one initiative called "Daily District Outreach," in order to support districts in their data use throughout the school year. The SD-STARS team chooses a different school district each day and communicates with the district STARS Account Manager (SAM). We help them take a deeper look at user accounts in the district, and we provide Excel worksheets with district-specific usage data.

More than a sharing of resources, the Daily District Outreach is meant to discover which districts desire more training. We give some ways for districts to engage with us and to ask us for different levels of support. The SD-STARS team is excited by the new opportunities to serve districts in ways that will meet their very specific needs.

State offices closed

The SD-STARS team will not be available on the following days, due to state offices being closed for the holidays:

- Monday, Dec. 23
- Tuesday, Dec. 24
- Wednesday, Dec. 25
- Wednesday, Jan. 1

We will be in the office to assist users Dec. 26-27, 30-31, and Jan. 2-3.

If your district's SAM hasn't heard from the SD-STARS team, don't worry! We are in the beginning stages of this initiative, so we've only contacted a handful of districts at this point. We hope to reach every district by the end of the school year. If you have a need for extra support or any SD-STARS question, you may reach us during business hours at STARSHelp@state.sd.us.

Cybersecurity incidents growing for public schools

According to a report by the K-12 Cybersecurity Resource Center, *The State of K-12 Cybersecurity: 2018 Year in Review*, public K-12 education agencies across the country experienced a total of 122 cybersecurity incidents during calendar year 2018. Many of these incidents were significant, resulting in the theft of millions of taxpayer dollars, stolen identities, tax fraud, and altered school records.

"Public schools are increasingly relying on technology for teaching, learning, and school operations," said Douglas A. Levin, president of EdTech Strategies and report author. "It should hardly be surprising, therefore, that they are experiencing the same types of data breaches and cybersecurity incidents that have plagued even the most advanced and well-resourced corporations and government agencies."

The interactive report includes a timeline of local TV news reports of the 'Top 10' cybersecurity incidents of 2018. These incidents include:

- March 2018 – An employee of a Texas district was a victim of a phishing attack. The attacker asked for and received W-2 forms for all district employees.

- March 2018 – Florida Virtual School unknowingly published confidential student and teacher data on the internet for nearly two years. The data were being sold on the dark net.

- April 2018 – A Massachusetts district paid $10,000 in Bitcoin to hackers so the district could regain access to their email, lunch services, and their own website.

- December 2018 – San Diego Unified schools found a phishing attack compromised student and staff data from the last almost 10 years.

Data for the 2018 report is drawn from publicly-disclosed incidents cataloged by the organization. Since 2016, the organization has documented over 415 publicly disclosed incidents, which equates to a rate of about one new publicly-reported incident every three days.

Unwrapping recent SD-STARS work

Data requests, data loads and data resources updates!

The SD-STARS team tackled several items during fall 2019, including two data requests, one data load, and two updates on documentation.

Data Request: 7th-12th addresses

SDCL 13-28-50 requires districts to provide 7th-12th grade student mailing addresses to the South Dakota Board of Regents and technical institutes for the purpose of sharing information about postsecondary opportunities. In November, the Department of Education used SD-STARS to complete this requirement for public districts. For those students whose "Student Directory Information" flag indicates the student does not consent to sharing directory information, their mailing address was suppressed.

Data Request: FAFSA

In November, the Department of Education used SD-STARS to pull a list of currently enrolled 12th grade public school students. This file populates the South Dakota Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Completion Portal. This portal is provided by the South Dakota Board of Regents and used by public school counselors and administrators to monitor students' progress toward FAFSA completion.

STARS Certified Trainers

STARS Certified Trainers have been trained by DOE staff on SD-STARS and are kept up-to-date on system developments and new reports. Districts can contact the trainer directly to request training at a cost to the district.

Julie Erickson—jerickson@tie.net

Michelle Glodt—mlglodt@gmail.com

Sandra Henry—Sandyhenry2010@gmail.com

Bobbi Maher—Bobbi.maher@outlook.com

MaryLou McGirr—marylouconsulting@gmail.com

Becky Mohr—beckymohr93@yahoo.com

Diane Olson—Diane.M.Olson@k12.sd.us

Janeen Outka—janeen.outka@teachwell.org

Marge Stoterau—margestoterau@gmail.com

Dianna Tyler—Dianna.tyler@k12.sd.us

Data Load: Dual Credit

The SD-STARS team is loading school year 2018-19 spring and summer dual credit data. There was a delay in loading the data due to several data requests from the Legislative Research Council. Data on students who participate in the state-sponsored dual credit program come from the Board of Regents and each of the technical institutes every term. Once loaded, these data are available to schools via the five dual credit reports in SD-STARS.

Updated Resource: SPED Student List DIG

The SD-STARS team recently updated the Report Data Interpretation Guide (DIG) for the SP.004.00-A SPED Accountability Student List. This report was enhanced in August 2019 to show accommodations by subject and to include all subgroups that appear on the Accountability Report Card. The DIG can be found in the content library, training center, or by clicking the "Link to Report Data Interpretation Guide (DIG)" in the report in SD-STARS.

Updated Resource: Data Sources and Reports

The SD-STARS team recently updated the Data Sources and Current Reports document. This document contains an inventory of the data sources of SD-STARS as well as a list of all the current reports that SD-STARS contains. Users can find this resource in SD-STARS in the Content Library and Training Center. Users can also find the document by clicking on the "Data Sources and Reports" button on the SD-STARS website found at https://doe.sd.gov/SDSTARS/.

Ask the Experts

Where is the Accountability Report Card's Equity Report?

A school-level equity report will be included with the 2019-20 Accountability Report Card, to be released in fall 2020. Meanwhile, the South Dakota Department of Education has sent out some tips to Targeted Support and Improvement contacts, so they can see if they are making progress.

Schools who are currently designated as Targeted Support and Improvement schools keep the designation for two years. During those two years, they will want to find information which will indicate whether they are demonstrating a positive trajectory on all of their school's eligible indicators.

To find their school's overall trajectory, users can find the data and graphs in the Accountability Report Cards for the 2017-18 and the 2018-19 school years. To determine trajectory status, please choose FAY students, one indicator at a time, for both school years. Further questions may be sent to Jordan Varilek at Jordan.Varilek@state.sd.us.

Why doesn't the Student Profile report have SDSA results?

The SD-STARS team is working on enhancements to include science assessment (SDSA) scores in SD-STARS reports. The team added SDSA scores to all assessment reports in SD-STARS, except for the Student Profile report.

Once SDSA scores are added to the Student Profile report, the Data Interpretation Guide (DIG) will be updated and available in the training center on the SD-STARS portal.

In the meantime, the Student Profile report has many useful pieces. When it was first released in October 2012, the profiles were much shorter than they are now. The SD-STARS team has since added new features such as:

- School, district, and state averages
- Special education section, with active programs per student
- English learner section, with ACCESS scores and exit goals, and more!

Please contact STARSHelp@state.sd.us with any questions you may have.

New Report: Subgroup Longitudinal Performance

Spurred by a request from the Division of Learning and Instruction, the SD-STARS team completed work on a new report. The report is called AC.031.00-X – Subgroup Longitudinal Performance.

Who? District and school users who have the Accountability permission in SD-STARS will be able to see the report.

What? This report allows users to look at performance on multiple accountability indicators and measures, over multiple years, for all the subgroups. Measures include things like graduation rates, math performance, English language arts growth, attendance, college and career assessment and coursework readiness, and more.

The report looks at accountability data. Since accountability data are frozen/static, the data found in these reports will only be updated annually and won't change from one day to the next.

The report displays both an aggregated line graph for the subgroups selected as well as individual data tables for each subgroup and school or district. Users can view performance for individual schools or the district as a whole. Users can also select schools that are alike in high poverty, low minority, or a specific school classification.

When? It is available now.

Where? The report can be found by first clicking on the red menu option that says REPORTS. Once on the reports page, look for the section called "Accountability."

Why? The report is useful when wanting to look at multiple years of accountability data. Want to see changes to high school completer rates for students with disabilities? It's in there! Want to how English learners performed as compared to all students on the ELA assessment? It's in there!

The report Data Interpretation Guide is in the works. Once it is available, you will be able to find it in the training center or in the content library.